# Summary

**T**he 18th Shell Youth Study is subtitled "A generation speaks up". Once again, the youth of today are forcefully stating their demands with regard to shaping the future of our society and demands the settings for the course needed for this be initiated today. Environmental protection and climate change, in particular, have gained considerably in importance as issues of relevance to the future. They are at the centre of the demand for greater participation and a call to action on the part of the political classes and society.

Their fundamentally pragmatic outlook continues to characterise young people in Germany today. As already described in previous Shell Youth Studies, young people are still willing to conform to performance standards to a high degree and, at the same time, wish for stable social relationships in their personal lives.

As part of their personal search for a secure and autonomous place in society, they adapt to prevailing circumstances so that they can seize opportunities that open up to the best degree possible. More so now than in the past, many young people attach importance to a much more conscious lifestyle and are clearly and loudly articulating their demands for a sustainable environment and society.

The results of the current Shell Youth Study show that there are no irreconcilable polarisations or divisions in attitudes despite clearly visible societal differences based on the origin of the young people concerned that continue to apply by virtue of differing levels of educational success. The differences between East and West, between male and female young people and between young people with and without an immigration background are also becoming smaller rather than larger.

A large number of similarities may be observed across all groups, including a growing concern for the future of the environment, a trend towards mutual respect and mindfulness in one's own life, a strong sense of justice, and a growing urge to take an active role in addressing these concerns.

However, the attraction to populism experienced by some young people cannot be overlooked. The criticism levelled by many of these young people against the so-called establishment in political life and society is also influenced by the fact that some of them generally feel that they haven't been consulted or involved sufficiently. In the current Shell Youth Study, we distinguish between young people as "cosmopolitans", "liberal-minded", "no clear position", "attracted to populism" and "national-populists". A clearly discernible polarisation may be observed between cosmopolitans and national-populists, but both groups taken together make up only about one-fifth of all young people.

## Politics and society

The political interests of young people continued to stabilise in 2019. 8% of young people consider themselves to be very interested and a further 33% consider themselves to be interested. Thus, although the interest is slightly lower compared to 2015 (41% compared to 43%), it is significantly higher seen from a long-term perspective compared to 2002, 2006 and 2010.

There is a clear gap in the educational levels among young people: Every second young person who[1] aspires to or has attained the school-leaving certificate [A levels] describes themselves as politically interested. This only applies to one in four young people who have completed or are aiming to complete lower secondary school. 66 % of students describe themselves as politically interested, making them the group with the greatest political interest.

Despite slight convergence, male adolescents (44%) still describe themselves as slightly more politically interested than female adolescents (38%). However, both genders attach equal importance to their own political involvement. At the moment, it even seems to be the case that girls are proving to be pioneers in political engagement. This applies above all to the "Fridays for Future" initiative which has a strong female presence in the media.

## The Internet represents the primary source for political information

In the meantime, the majority of young people obtain information about political topics online. News websites or news portals are at the top of the list (20%); many also refer to social media content, i.e. to relevant information sources in social networks, messenger apps (14%) or on YouTube (9%). Although television is cited as a source of information by 23% of young people, 15% use radio and 15% also use traditional print media. However, the Internet and social media have now outstripped traditional media as the place to intentionally search for political information.

However, traditional media sources still enjoy the highest trust levels. The vast majority consider information broadcast by ARD or ZDF television news to be trustworthy. The same applies to the large national daily newspapers, although young people in East Germany (68%) also trust these newspapers much less than their peers in the West (83%).
On the other hand, nearly half of all young people describes YouTube as less or not trustworthy. In the case of Facebook, the figure is even more than two thirds of young people who do not trust information offered on this platform. Similarly, Twitter is only trusted by a minority.

Trust in specific channels influences their use. It can be said that young people who are interested in politics frequently trust traditional information and news channels (print and public broadcasting) and do not search for information either exclusively or even primarily on social media channels.

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1 We have foregone the use of female word forms in some instances for sake of readability. However, both genders are intended as a rule.

### Environmental and climate protection have become top issues of concern

Whereas the economic situation, rising poverty, fear of unemployment or of not being able to find a training place, were cited as primary concerns in 2010; the picture has changed significantly since then. At present, almost three out of four young people cite pollution as the main problem that frightens them, followed by fear of terrorist attacks (66%) and climate change (65%). The economic situation with increasing poverty, on the other hand, is only mentioned by a little more than one out of every two young people; the fear of losing a job or of not finding a training place, are mentioned by just over one in three.

Remarkably, more than half of young people (56%) are afraid of growing hostility between people with different views. This aspect, which reflects the potential polarisation of society, worries more young people than economic and social hardships. East German youths (59%) list this even more frequently than in the West (55%).

In 2019, it is still the case that young people in Germany (52%) continue to cite fears of growing xenophobia more frequently than fears of further immigration (33%). In contrast to 2015, however, every other person (47% in the West and 55% in the East) is now in favour of accepting fewer immigrants than before.
In 2015, this figure was only slightly more than one in three young people (34% in the West, 49% in the East).

### All things considered, Germany is perceived to be socially just

59% percent of young people are believe that Germany is socially just all things considered. If the query is refined a little, 79% agree that everyone in Germany has the opportunity to receive vocational training according to their ability and talent. Somewhat more than half (57%) believe that people in Germany receive fair compensation based on their performance; and also somewhat more than half (55%) also believe that disadvantaged people in Germany receive sufficient support. Agreement with the question of social justice correlates strongly to the class of origin of the young people concerned: The lower the level of origin, the lower the proportion of those who agree with this statement. For example, one in two young people from the lowest stratum of origin mention a lack of social justice, while only 25% of those from the highest stratum share this view.

### The EU represents opportunities, prosperity, cultural diversity and peace

Young people see the EU as an opportunity, not a risk, and, therefore, do not view it critically: One in two young people rates the EU positively (43%) or very positively (7%), whereas not even one in ten young people has a negative (7%) or even very negative (1%) view of the EU. Even if this cannot be characterised as EU euphoria, this should be interpreted more as positive realism in view of overall trends in Europe.

Almost all young people emphasise first and foremost that they associate the

EU with freedom of movement, i.e. the opportunity to travel, study, work or live in other European countries. Europe without borders, in which it is possible to live and work permanently, as in one's own country, is the most important achievement of the EU from the point of view of young people. Of similar importance, even if slightly lower compared to 2006, is the issue of cultural diversity, which four out of five young people positively associate with the EU. Similarly, four out of five young people stress that the EU stands for peace and democracy.

Nearly three out of four young people consider bureaucracy to be the most critical point with regard to Europe - however, this is trending downward slightly. The aspect of economic prosperity, on the other hand, has risen significantly and is associated with the EU by almost three-quarters of young people in Germany. Almost inversely, only one in three young people still associates the issue of unemployment with the EU. Growing acceptance of the EU can also be seen in the fact that fewer young people associate crime (39%) or the loss of their own home culture (25%) with the EU.

**Between liberal-mindedness and attraction to populism**

Populist patterns of argument have proven to be attractive to young people as well, however, important differences are apparent as well: The majority of young people (57%) emphasise that they think it is a good thing that Germany has taken in so many refugees. The statement "In Germany, you can't say anything bad about foreigners without immediately being called a racist", however, gets even more approval (68%). This pattern of arguments covers an apparently widespread feeling that there are things that one should not address without being morally sanctioned according to their own subjective perception. Similarly, criticism of the so-called establishment ("The government is hiding the truth from the people" and "The state cares more about refugees than about Germans who need help"), which more than half of young people agree with, obviously reflects the perception of not being taken seriously enough and ignored. At the same time, however, it is also true that almost every other young person does not see it that way and, therefore, does not agree with in part or at all.

What all populist statements have in common is that they are based on affective components, i.e. emotions, rather than cognitively reflected positions. They play to resentments and fears. Conversely, however, this also means that any quickly expressed consent to basic populist patterns does not necessarily have to entail consistent convictions in itself that would then be sustainably effective or guide specific actions.

We created five "populism categories" in order to describe agreement with populist attitudes.
They are distributed as follows: Some 12% of young people (15 to 25 year-olds) can be described as cosmopolitans. They support the fact that Germany has taken in many refugees and reject almost all populist statements. 27% of young people are described as liberal-minded. The majority of them also approve of the fact that Germany has accepted many refugees and distance themselves from explicitly social-

or national-populist statements. 28% of young people form the largest group comparatively speaking, those without a clear opinion. The majority of them also agree with the statement that Germany has taken in many refugees is a good thing. However, they are often susceptible to statements intended to create a vague "compelled opinion" and that tie into existing distrust of government and the so-called establishment. 24% of young people can be characterised as attracted to populism. Out of these, only one in three believes it to be good that Germany accepted a large number of refugees. By contrast, nearly all of them agree with the populist statements "In Germany, you can't say anything bad about foreigners without immediately being called a racist" and "The state cares more about refugees than about Germans who need help" on the other hand.

The same applies to the statement "The government is hiding the truth from the people". 9% of young people can be characterised as national-populists. They consistently agree with all populist statements, are sceptical concerning the reception of refugees and also emphasise their generally negative attitude towards diversity.

**Less control over one's own life, general perception of discrimination and scepticism concerning diversity typify those attracted to populism**

The higher the educational level, the lower the attraction to populism. Of young people with higher educational levels, one in two are open-minded or cosmopolitan, while the opposite is true of young people with lower educational levels: In such cases, those attracted to populism or those who are national-populists include far more than one in two. Attraction to populism is also somewhat higher in the East. In this region, a somewhat smaller share of young people belong to the liberal-minded or cosmopolitan group (33% in total), while a larger share belong to the populist or national-populist group (42% in total). In the West, these shares have shifted somewhat more in the direction of being liberal-minded or cosmopolitan (40%). Those attracted to populism and national-populists (31% in total) are encountered here to a correspondingly lower degree.

Those characterised as cosmopolitans or liberal-minded have a rather positive picture of social justice in Germany. Only about one in four of both groups thinks that all things considered, Germany is not sufficiently fair. Even amongst those without a clear position, this only applies to one in three. On the other hand, every other person in the populist group complains of a lack of social justice. Among the national-populists, the figure is even three out of four young people who do not see sufficient levels of social justice in Germany. This corresponds to agreement with the statements "I believe that others are often preferred to me" and "I believe that others control my life". Populism, thus, supports the desire to regain control.

National-populists, in particular, often reject the pluralisation of lifestyles and diversity. Almost every other young person who may be characterised as national-populist has a critical and sceptical attitude towards "recognising and respecting cultural diversity". In contrast to all other groups, these young people do not identify with this value, or

do so only at levels that are far below-average. A feeling of lack of control is accompanied by a rejection of everything that is seen as part of a "foreign culture" and cannot be reconciled with their personal ideal of what life should look like.

### Tolerance remains their trademark

The vast majority of young people in Germany continue to be tolerant of other ways of life, minorities and social groups.
We measure tolerance using questions about reservations towards potential neighbours such as refugee families, Turks or homosexuals. It turned out that although only a minority, but still 20% would not like it if they had a refugee family as their neighbour. Reservations about a Turkish family are similarly high (18%). 13% would reject a German family with many children and 12% would reject a flat shared by students. Nine percent would object to a homosexual couple. Jewish families receive negative ratings in the fewest number of cases. Here, 8% would not want them as neighbours. The vast majority of young people, however, are tolerant and say that they do not care and would not mind if people from these groups were to move into the apartment next door.

Scepticism of diversity that is typical for populist attitudes is directly expressed in resentments expressed against "foreigners" or groups with other lifestyles that are apparently not viewed as acceptable. Two out of three national-populists, and one in three of those who are inclined to populism, would reject refugee families as neighbours. Rejection of Jewish families is also disproportionately high among young people with a national-populist orientation. One in three of them wouldn't want them as neighbours. Young people who tend to embrace populism are less conspicuous here. In this context, the frequency with which Jewish fellow citizens are rejected is only slightly higher than with the other groups.

Young people with origins from Islamic countries (Turkey, Arab countries, other Islamic countries of origin) express reservations less frequently towards others than are expressed by Germans without a migrant background. Specifically, however, they more frequently reject homosexual couples (18%) as well as Jewish families (14%). Young people with an immigration background from Eastern European countries, former Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union are also slightly more likely to reject homosexuals (12%) and to express reservations about refugees (19%).

### Satisfaction with democracy has risen significantly among young people in the East

For the vast majority of young people in Germany, democracy as a form of government is seen as a given. In concrete terms, almost four out of five young people (77%) are more or less satisfied with democracy as practised in Germany - these values have even been rising for many years. The trend among young people in eastern Germany is particularly remarkable. Whereas in 2015, it was only about one in two respondents in the East was more or less satisfied with democracy in Germany; today this figure is already two out of three. Although the differences

between East and West German youths continue to exist, the two groups are becoming increasingly similar in terms of the assessment of German society.

Young people with national-populist views, on the other hand, are mostly dissatisfied with democracy in Germany (65%) and a large majority (73%) would welcome a "strong hand" that ensures order. In the case of those without a clear position, this is one in three, and in the case of the other two groups far removed from populism, only a small minority shares this view. What is interesting about the function and effect of populism is that the majority of those who do not hold clear views, and even those who are inclined to populism, are satisfied with democracy in Germany and clearly support it as a form of government. If one considers that an affinity for populism is strongly accompanied by anger and indignation at supposed elite conspiracies, then one would have expected negative responses on the part of those with populist tendencies. So it is also evident here that populism is particularly attractive when it is linked to unconscious reservations, fears or disenchantment. Clear scepticism to democracy, on the other hand, can only be found among young people who consistently share national-populist positions and whose criticism of the "ruling elites" has morphed into openly anti-democratic positions.

As already observed in the last Shell Youth Studies, there is still no noticeable decline in fundamental disenchantment with politics despite increasing acceptance of democracy. Thus, the trust that young people place in the parties remains low, and the support for the populist statement "I don't think

politicians care about what people like me think" has also risen compared to 2015 (71%). The connection to educational levels is conspicuous in this context as well. The lower the class of origin and the educational level, the greater the disenchantment.

In summary, we can say that young people in Germany have retained their fundamental positions in this context. despite the debate about the refugee crisis and the increasing right-wing and national populism. They are aware of the importance of a united Europe, they advocate democracy as the best form of government for Germany, and they are predominantly tolerant. Despite deep and seemingly irreconcilable differences regarding the question of emigration to Germany, polarisation on the part of the young generation in the sense of division into large and irreconcilable camps cannot be affirmed as a whole.

## Personal commitment on the part of young people fluctuates and appears to be declining slightly

The share of young people who say they are socially, politically or simply committed to helping other people has long been between 33% and 40%. However, more and more boys and girls are now saying that they are not at all committed to these issues, and the share of those who are at least occasionally active is also declining.
In any event, boys and girls are equally committed, as are young people in East and West Germany. Differences may be viewed from a standpoint of social background: The higher the background, the higher the level of personal commitment.

In addition to the educational background, experiencing personal or community commitment in the family seen as common practice and shaped one's childhood are equally important. Irrespective of this, better material living conditions naturally also offer more freedom for personal commitment.

### Optimistic view of the future

58% of young people are currently optimistic about their own future, 37% mixed ("it depends on the day") and only 5% are rather gloomy. The share of optimistic young people has, thus, decreased slightly compared to 2015 (61%), and the trend of increasing optimism observed since 2006 has stalled, however overall levels remains similarly high.

It is noteworthy that young people from the socially weakest strata have become more optimistic - contrary to the trend. While in 2010 and 2015, only nearly one third (32%) were optimistic about their own future, in 2019, this figure is much higher at 45%. By contrast, optimism in the upper social strata has slowed noticeably since 2015. Young people from the upper class (63% compared to 76% earlier) and the upper middle class (62% compared to 71% before) remain mostly optimistic about their own future, although somewhat less so.

Just as was the case in 2015, slightly more than half (52%) view the future of society as positive. Growing fears of environmental destruction and climate change have not changed this figure.

### Value systems

Value systems are understood to comprise three constitutive aspects in the Shell Youth Study: 1) Life goals one strives for, 2) virtues in the sense of normative proficiency ideals and 3) specific attitudes with which one positions oneself in relation to social or everyday issues. These values together comprise a value system which acts as a compass for one's own attitude, assessments and behaviour.

### Family and relationships remain the central points of orientation for one's own lifestyle

"Family" and "social relationships" are by far the most important values that almost all young people want to see in their own lives, even more important than "personal responsibility" (89%) and "independence" (83%), which mark special developmental milestones, especially in adolescence as a transition to adulthood. Nor has the emphasis on virtues such as respect for law and order (87%), diligence and ambition (81%) or security (77%) changed since 2002. The family is a "safe haven" that gives young people stability and support, whereas a focus on performance stands for the "promise" of finding social recognition and being able to participate in life. The latter is also accepted and not questioned by today's younger generation. The fact that young people are nevertheless open to new ideas and can, therefore, take on a role as bringers of change is shown by the fact that they name "developing their own imagination and creativity" as a similarly important value.

Four out of five young people state that they "want to enjoy life to the fullest". This attitude has steadily gained importance

since 2002 and has remained consistent since 2015. An emphasis on the enjoyment of life underlines the importance that young people attach to their own involvement. The here and now, combined with the need to personally participate in the society's various offerings, is also decisive for a vast majority of young people. Family and community, as well as a rather hedonistic striving for pleasure and enjoyment, are not mutually exclusive but may even complement each other. For many young people, therefore, wanting to enjoy life to the fullest also means that they do not want to see their job nor their leisure time confined.

**Conscious living and a claim to autonomy**

The clearest change in young peoples' value system is the trend toward conscious living: Health awareness is important to four out of five young people. This is about as important among young people as the desire for independence, the importance of diligence and ambition, and enjoyment of life. Protecting the environment is important for 71% of youth and is, therefore, even more important than one's own high standard of living (63%). This trend and its associated changes are clearly visible at this point: In 2002, 60% of young people named environmental awareness as an important value; this is now the case for almost three out of four young people. With only one exception, there is no other area that has gained in importance to the same extent since then. Interestingly, this exception is political commitment, the importance of which has increased even more from the

point of view of young people, albeit at a lower level. Environmental, climate and health awareness as well as a conscious lifestyle go hand in hand with the desire to be guided by one's feelings when making one's own decisions. This is consistent with the fact that respecting diversity is a top value for just over four out of five young people. The great importance attached to a conscious and attentive lifestyle is likely to be a major driving force for young people in reassessing their own political commitment: Currently, this figure is 34%.

For young people, values that provide meaning have gained in importance in addition to idealistic values. In contrast, the trend is moving in the other direction in the case of materialistic values aimed at increasing personal power and assertion. Only one in three young people stresses the importance of their own influence and power, i.e. significantly less than those for whom it is important to help the socially disadvantaged (62%). Asserting oneself and personal needs in relation to others is likewise important for fewer young people than is the case for tolerance in relation to opposing opinions (59%). This has nothing to do with a lack of own ambition. Almost all young people (87%) claim to have put their goals and aspirations into practice and almost two out of three consider it important to achieve more than the others. This trend also shows that values held by young people are shifting: They tend to be more attentive and tolerant, even in their personal lives.

Two-thirds of all young people consider a high standard of living to be desirable; this value has been fluctuating somewhat for years but has remained at roughly the same level since 2002. Value systems that characterise tradition and conformity are becoming less important. Non-conformity continues to shape adolescence. Even though it appeared that traditional values were on the rise in 2015, this trend has now reversed again.

### Young women as trendsetters for a more conscious lifestyle

Young women represent changes in values in a particularly clear manner. In particular, values related to the conscious lifestyle value system are more frequently close to their hearts: For example, almost four out of five young women consider it important to behave in an environmentally conscious manner under all circumstances, compared with slightly more than two out of three young men. Social orientation is also more pronounced among them. In this context, two out of three young women - compared to slightly more than one in two young men - find it important to help the socially disadvantaged. The importance of their own political commitment has also increased among young women (34%) and is now valued by them as highly as by their male peers.

Young men are less emotional and more materialistic than young women. Above all, their desire to have power and influence is much more pronounced. In any event, more than one young man in three, but only about one young woman in every four, consider this to be important. Young women are by no means lacking assertiveness. They

consider themselves to be as ambitious as young men (88%) and consider it just as important for their lifestyle to assert themselves and their needs in dealings with others (49%). Both young men and young women believe in the importance of a high standard of living.

### Young people from the lowest stratum of origin perceive significantly greater disadvantages

Virtue and competence have positive connotations for almost all young people - across all classes. Respect for law and order or diligence and ambition are important guiding principles for all young people. By comparison, young people from the highest social stratum most frequently cite diligence and ambition as their performance ideal, although they are closely followed by their peers from the lower middle class. All things considered, however, the gaps between the strata are rather small. Ambition is, therefore, not a primarily middle-class phenomenon, but a clear guiding orientation for the upper and lower strata as well.

High levels of belief in performance across all strata is remarkable in view of the fact that young people from the lowest stratum of origin perceive themselves to be the most disadvantaged. After all, almost two out of three of these less privileged youths state that they perceive that others make decisions for them on a more frequent basis, whereas this is otherwise only reported by just under one in two and, in the case of their peers from the upper classes of origin, only by one in three. There are also differences in the perception that others receive preferential treatment. Every second young person from the lowest stratum of origin believes

this to be the case compared to only one in five from the upper stratum. At this point, the perceptions of young people from different social strata are clearly divergent. Accordingly, the focus on performance described here apparently does not protect against perceiving oneself as unjustifiably discriminated against or even as left behind.

Personal assertiveness on the part of young people from the lower classes of origin stands out: For 59% of the young people from the lowest class of origin, and for 51% of those from the lower middle class, asserting oneself and one's own needs in dealings with others is important. This share drops to 43% in the upper middle and upper classes. Lower perceptions of control and a higher sense of disadvantage in lower strata does not result in a feeling of resignation for the majority. On the contrary: For a majority, the desire for nearly unconditional autonomy is a defining characteristic. These young people don't want to be kept down. Young people from the upper classes emphasise the desire for autonomy somewhat less often; this is likely the case because have less of a need per se because of their more privileged position. Respect for diversity is important for 70% of young people from the lowest strata, but for almost 90% of their peers from the upper strata. The claim to creative power, in the sense of autonomy, is not unproblematic for young people from the lower classes, however, and can, depending on the situation and its manifestation, also lead to an even greater loss of social connection.

Environmentally conscious behaviour is also strongly related to belonging to the strata: This is central to some three quarters of the young people from the upper and middle classes, in the lower middle and lowest classes the figure is just over two out of three, and one quarter of this group do not even consider environmentally conscious behaviour to be important.

### There are no differences regarding their primary goals in life between young people with and without an immigration background

Family, friends and social relationships combined with personal responsibility and independence also represent central goals in life for young people with an immigration background. In addition, their attitudes and behaviours are driven by the same virtues as German youths without an immigration background, such as diligence and ambition, striving for security and leading a good family life.

The main difference between young people with and without an immigration background is the importance they attach to faith in God. For nearly two out of three young people from Islamic countries, faith in God plays an important role, whereas for German young people without an immigration background, and those from other OECD countries, this is the case for only one in four. Respect for law and order is comparably high among all young people, whether with or without an immigration background. In addition, young people with an immigration background from Islamic countries of origin or from Eastern Europe, the former USSR or former Yugoslavia identify particularly strongly with the performance and virtue standards; much more strongly than is the case for young people without

an immigration background. The same applies to the high standard of living, which young people with an immigration background from the two large regions of origin mentioned above also rate as more important in comparison. This is expressed in the "dream" of prosperity and participation in the foreign country in which one lives and in which most of them were born. To that end, they participate with all of their hard work and ambition, respect laws and basic order.

### Young people with an immigration background perceive significant disadvantages

However, the importance of virtues and a focus on performance are only one side of the coin for young people with an immigration background. Perceptions of injustice comprise the other side of the coin. More than 40% of young people with an immigration background from the two large regions of origin mentioned above perceive that they are disadvantaged more frequently than others in daily life. In particular, this latter perception distinguishes them from their peers without an immigration background and also from those who originate from other OECD countries. Young people with an immigration background consider asserting themselves and their needs in relation to others to be important to their lives. There is a similar pattern here to that observed in the case of young people from the lower classes of origin.

### Respect and tolerance as important values

Nearly nine out of ten young people with an immigration background from Islamic countries of origin, and even more from Eastern Europe, the former USSR or former Yugoslavia stress the need to respect diversity. This figure is about four out of five among their peers without an immigration background and also among young people from other OECD countries. The young people with an immigration background concerned here are, of course, particularly likely to think of respect for their own culture and way of life that they often miss in German-majority society. On the other hand - as mentioned above - we found that some of these young people do not have this expectation of tolerance towards other minorities - in particular Jews and homosexuals.

Overall, there are no fundamental differences in core values among young people with and without an immigration background. In point of fact, commonalities prevail. The pragmatic basic attitude of young people, i.e. their willingness to adopt performance expectation to a high degree and to adapt to their respective circumstances, combined with the desire for stable social relationships in their personal lives, likewise comprise a common framework in this context.

## Family and living environments

Young peoples' relationship to their parents change with the transition out of their parental home and concurrent increase in focus on their peers. However, this relationship remains important, not only emotionally, but also as an orientation for one's own attitude towards children and family.

## Relationships with parents remain very positive

Since 2002, the share of young people who have a positive relationship with their parents has increased steadily: Four out of ten young people (42%) get along well with their parents, half (50%) get along with them despite occasional disagreements. Accordingly, young people are satisfied with their parents' upbringing. They continue to be primary role models: 16% would raise their children in the same way as they were raised, and 58% in a similar way. Less than a quarter of young people (23%) would raise their children differently or even quite differently than they were raised by their parents (29% in 2002). However, the relationship between young people and their parents is much better in the higher social levels of origin than in less privileged levels.

Nearly two thirds (68%) of all 12 to 25 year-olds who do not yet have a child themselves would like to have children later. This shows that the desire to have children has remained very stable over time. Young women are slightly more likely to be sure that they want children than young men (71% to 64%). Although there are still visible differences between East and West (71% to 67%) when it comes to the desire to have children, the desire to have children among East German women has been declining since 2002 and is increasingly approaching that of women in the West.

## Relationships and ideas concerning employment roles in a relationship

5% of 12 to 14 year-olds are in a stable partnership, and more than half of 22 to 25 year-olds (52%) are in such a relationship. Across all age groups, young women are more likely than young men to speak of a stable partnership. When young people are asked how they would like to see employment roles shared within a relationship if they were 30 years old and had a two-year-old child, young men and women are nearly unanimous in what the ideal division of responsibilities would look like: In a relationship with a small child, the woman, not the man, should scale back their job. 65% of women would like to work part-time at most - and 68% of young men would like the same of their partner. Many men would like to play a role as an "active father" who participates in childcare, and only 41% of them would like to work full-time in the family situation described above. Of young women, slightly more (51%) would like the father to work full-time. Overall, both genders have quite similar ideas about work on the part of the father and mother.

Overall, more than half (54%) of all 12 to 25 year-olds prefer a "male breadwinner model": 10% prefer the "sole male breadwinner" model (the man provides for the family alone and works 30 or 40 hours a week), another 44% prefer the model of a "primary male breadwinner" model (the man works at least 30 hours, the woman at most part-time). Differences between the old and new federal states can be seen here as well. Young people in the West think more traditionally about this point: 58% of men and 56% of women would like to have a family with a male sole or primary breadwinner, while in the East only 38% of men and 31% of women hold this opinion. The father as the breadwinner of the family is - at least in the West - obviously not a purely male idea; this model is also favoured by many young women. Models

based on a more egalitarian division are significantly more popular in the new federal states than in the West.

### Friendships: Quality is more important than quantity

Friendships with peers are of central importance for young people, whereby quality is apparently more important than quantity in the case of social relationships: For 97% of all 12 to 25 year-olds, "good friends who approve of and accept you" are important, and only 71% find it just as important to have a large number of contacts with other people. Even though a large part of communications among digital natives takes place via digital media, their friendships largely continue to play out in the "offline world": Only 5% of all young people state that they have only virtual contact with half or more of their friends. Two thirds (67%) only have friends with whom they (also) have personal contact.

Does origin play a role in friendships? For 79% young people without an immigration background, their circle of friends is made up mainly of Germans; only one in five (18%) is made up of Germans and migrants equally. One fifth (21%) of young people with an immigration background have migrants as a majority of their friends; half (51%) have both Germans and migrants as friends and a quarter (25%) have a majority of Germans as their friends.

Just under half of all 12- to 25-year-olds (48%) are very satisfied with their own circle of friends; four out of ten (41%) are satisfied and one in ten just respond "so-so" (10%). Only 1% are dissatisfied or even very dissatisfied. The social class of origin is also important in this context: Whereas 56% of young people from upper classes expressed great satisfaction with their circle of friends, only 36% from the lower class did so.

### Importance of religion, faith and church

Faith has lost considerable importance over the course of the last 20 years for both Catholic and Protestant youth: Faith is important for only 39% of Catholic and 24% of Protestant youth. The figures are different for Muslim youth: Faith in God is important to 73% of them. Similar denominational patterns can be seen in the specific practice of religion: Only 18% of Catholic youth, 13% of Protestant youth and 60% of Muslim youth pray at least once a week.

Church as an institution is viewed positively by more than one third of all young people - regardless of whether or not tied to a denomination: 69% think it is good that there is a church (75% of Catholics, 79% of Protestants and even 45% of non-denominational young people).

### Education and profession

Education and the associated success at school create essential foundations for the future lives of young people. Whereas societal changes, for example a reduction study terms and German universities and the introduction of the eight-year secondary school in the Western federal states, have resulted in the observation of shortened adolescence in recent years accompanied by an increased in

employment rates for 12 - 25 year-olds, this trend is slowly moving in the other direction. Increased rates of young people who complete school with university-level or leaving certificates or entrance qualification for a university of applied sciences have contributed to this. This has resulted in an extension of educational stages such that the share of 12 - 25 year-olds who are employed has once again declined slightly since 2010 (23%) and today (21%), however, this is still far ahead of figures at the start of our time series of 16% in 2002.

In the meantime, the trend towards a kind of two-tier school system is continuing apace in the educational landscape. Whereas in 2002, almost half of all students attended a lower-level secondary school (Hauptschule or Realschule), this figures now stands at only one quarter. On the other hand, during this period, both secondary schools (41% to 47%) and integrated model schools (13% to 26%) have gained popularity. There are also no longer any significant differences in access to secondary schools between urban and rural areas.

### Social background and education still correlate

Girls attend secondary school much more frequently than boys (53% to 42%). Differences based on social status remain much more pronounced and unchanged over time.
Whereas only a small minority of young people from the lower stratum (13%) make it to secondary school, this is the case for a broad majority of young people from higher social levels (71%).

These young people are optimistic in their views of impending uncertainties in their educational careers. A large majority of students are, therefore, confident that they will reach their still-high educational aspirations in the form of the desired school-leaving qualifications. This broad majority is also evident amongst vocational trainees where finding a job after their training is concerned, and even stronger in the case of university students where the issue is finding an appropriate job within one year of completing their studies.

However, there is a large contrast in the case of young people who have already experienced interruptions in their educational careers. We have taken the optimism of youth as an example. Only 47% of young people who have already experienced critical educational events view the future with confidence, and only 30% of those who expect uncertainties in the qualification phase view the future with confidence. However, 63% of young people who have not reported such difficulties are confident.

### Professional expectations have remained stable - security remains the first priority

The need for security continues to dominate expectations of professional life. 93% of young people consider a secure job to be (very) important. On the other hand, a job for which young people do not have to move is frequently less (very) important for them (52%). For almost all young people (93%), it is important for family and children not to be neglected.
The expectations of professional life and its organisation can be summarised on the basis of five dimensions: With regard to the topic of benefit orientation, high

income and good opportunities for advancement are of primary importance, however sufficient leisure time alongside work is important as well. With regard to the topic of fulfilment orientation, the meaning of one's own conduct in professional life is the main priority. Central aspects also include opportunities to care for others and to do something useful for society. The issue of work-life balance includes the switch to part-time work as soon as children are in the picture and the possibility of short-term adjustments to working hours to take one's needs into account. The predictability of professional life related to the everyday dimension of working life. In this case, the focus is on regular working hours with defined start and end times. At the same time, another important factor is that no move is needed for a job. Career orientation includes the idea that overtime is part of a professional career and the willingness to work weekends when there is a corresponding offset during the week. Incidentally, these are the two statements with the lowest overall approval figures. Young men place more emphasis on benefit orientation and career orientation, while young women place more emphasis on fulfilment orientation, work-life balance, and the predictability of professional life.

Four types of young people's vocational orientation can be derived from these five aspects of professional life.

For high-achievers (32%), everything is equally important to some degree. Both benefit and fulfilment are central to their professional lives. Their own career opportunities are also essential for them. Work-life balance, and to a lesser extent

predictability, are likewise viewed positively. More than the other groups, they believe in the promise of advancement through hard work, and, more frequently than others, believe that opportunities are fairly distributed in Germany. At the same time, they often have the feeling that others are in control of their lives. Recognising and respecting diversity are important to them. With regard to their own educational and social backgrounds, the composition of the high-achievers does not differ from that of other groups. They are average even when it comes to worrying about one's own job.

The idealists (21%) focus clearly on the aspect of fulfilment. At the same time, it is important to them for their profession not to dominate their entire life. Daily predictability of work, and especially the benefit of work, are less important by contrast. Their willingness to work flexible hours and overtime tends to be moderate. Idealists are much more likely to have better school qualifications. In addition, they are more frequently from the upper-middle or upper classes. The idealistic attitude may be more frequently encountered in the federal states, in the West in particular, and among Germans without an immigration background. Recognising and respecting diversity is particularly important to this group. The issue of unemployment or not finding a suitable training place is of little concern to them. Idealists report at especially low rates that they feel that someone else is controlling their lives. At the same time, they rarely perceive that Germany is fair and that work really makes social advancement possible.

In the case of the down-to-earth group, (24%), benefits and daily predictability are the dominant factors. They are neutral in

regard to the desire for fulfilment. The compatibility of work with other aspects of life, and a career in particular, are less important to them. This may be encountered more frequently in the West German states, they are much more concerned with vocational training and their jobs. Just like the idealists, they believe less in the promise of advancement through hard work and the idea that things are fair in Germany than is the case for the hard workers. In terms of education, class affiliation and origin, this group represents a cross-section of the population. In contrast to the other groups, young men make up a clearer majority.

The reserved group (23%) do not feel that major aspects of professional life appeal to them.
This applies to benefits, fulfilment and work-life balance. On the other hand, a career and, above all, the ability to plan their daily work are very important to them. The reserved group come from lower-tier social groups and are less educated to a greater degree. Against this background, they worry about the possible loss of a job or training place to the same degree as the down-to-earth group. Compared to all other groups, they are the least willing to recognise and respect diversity.

### A secure job, sufficient leisure time and high income are priorities

As part of the current Shell Youth Study, we also surveyed which aspects of working life are most important to young people when it comes time to decide.
In other words, when they need to set priorities, most young people prefer material aspects and job security rather than the substantive value of their work. A secure job, the expectation of having enough leisure time in addition to work and a high income all represent high priorities. This attitude also appears to be very pragmatic. Immediate life planning is the focal point. In addition income-earning potential, this includes the security of having made the transition to professional life as well as compatibility with other life goals concerning family and leisure time.

### Leisure time

In addition to recreation, leisure time offers young people space for self-development and social integration. Socialising, sports and creativity remain important as leisure activities. However, digital leisure activities are continuing to gain importance.

By comparison, young people today (55%) are less likely to see each other in person less frequently (2002: 62%). In 2019, family activities are among the most frequent leisure activities for 23% of young people, (2002: 16%). This has, thus, become more important for young people and corresponds with increasingly positive relationships with parents. 45% of young people often stream videos in their spare time (2015: 15%). Classical television has lost importance (49% to 33%) to a corresponding degree. The importance of playing games on a console or computer (23%) has remained stable over the long term. This type of gaming is a primary leisure activity (57%) especially for 12- to 14-year-old boys. The importance of active participation in organised sports (27%)

remains constant; leisure sports (24%) have lost some of popularity. Reading books, and especially magazines, is less important to young people today than it was just under 20 years ago. Creative or artistic activities are enjoying increasing popularity among young women.

The social origin plays an important role in leisure behaviour: Young people from the lower social strata surf the web more often and play games or watch television more regularly than their peers from the higher social levels. Instead, the latter are ahead in "active" pursuits such as sports, reading or creative activities.

From the standpoint of leisure time typologies, the media focussed comprise the largest group (37%); young people in this group stream and game at much higher levels than others. Social contacts play a much smaller role in leisure time activities of media focussed youth. Boys and men (70%) are disproportionately represented in this group. The 31% classified as familyoriented, of which a majority of 63% are women, are characterised by traditional media consumption (television, magazines, books) in addition to family activities. Of those classified as socially focused (17%), four out of five are 18 years or older - this group stands out from the other young people mainly because of their evening outings (clubs or parties, bar or pub). Those classified as actively creatively engaged (15%) are creatively or artistically active much more frequently than other young people or are involved in a project, initiative or association. Six out of ten (62%) of these young people are women; middle and upper social strata are represented at above-average levels.

An above-average number of well-educated people can also be found in this group with two thirds (68%) who have or want to achieve the leaving certificate or subject-related higher education entrance qualification.

## Ways of accessing the Internet and duration of Internet use

70% of young people primarily use their smartphone to get online. According to their self-assessment, they spend an average of 3.7 hours on the Internet on an ordinary day. There are no noticeable differences in gender, age or social background, and it is normal for all young people to spend a lot of time online.

The Internet is by no means merely an entertainment medium for young people. For them, communication comes first: 96% check into social media at least one per day (messenger services or social networks). Although 76% go online at least once a day for entertainment purposes (be it music, video streaming, gaming or reading posts from people they follow), 71% also search for information at least once a day (general, school, education or work, or about politics and society). They use the Internet much less frequently for self-promotion, only 12% post photos, videos, music or blog posts on the Internet at least once a day.

## Concerns and uncertainty

Concerns and uncertainty predominate when it comes to their opinions on the Internet and social networks: 60% do not like the fact that as Internet users, they are part of a business model and that companies such as Facebook or Google earn a lot of money exploiting user data. Similarly, the same percentage (61%) fear that they have no control over data that remains online. A majority of young people also believes that there is hate

speech (58%) or fake news (51%) on the Internet. Somewhat less pronounced is the fear of missing something if they are not constantly online. 40% think you have to be on social networks to see what others are doing, and 38% say they would suddenly lose half their lives if they lost their smartphones.

Even though the majority of young people indeed have a nuanced view of the Internet, this leads to specific actions in relatively few instances: Only one third (31%) review privacy settings before using social networking sites.

## Internet user typologies

Young people use the Internet in a variety of ways. Internet user typologies illustrate individual usage patterns and different attitudes: One third (33%) are entertainment consumers.

They are active in social media and entertainment on an above-average basis but are cautious both in terms of information and their own contributions. At 4.0 hours a day, they are online slightly longer than average users. The youngest age group is particularly represented in this group. Entertainment consumers are somewhat less critical and less attentive to data protection than are average users.

The function-based users (24%) are focused on messenger services, information searches and use the Internet for school, training or work; they are more active than average in these areas and other activities are less important to them. Accordingly, at 2.9 hours a day, they spend less time on the Internet than the average. Women and those with higher social status have above-average representation in this group. Function-based users are disproportionately critical

and cautious about the Internet. They also exhibit fewer signs of dependence than others.

The intensive all-around users (19%) are online at above-average levels (4.3 hours per day) and use the Internet for the broadest range of activities (especially related to information about politics, education or professional life), however, they are cautious with regard to their own online contributions. This group includes above-average numbers of older people, men and young people with a higher level of education along with those with higher social status. This group is comparatively critical of the Internet as was the case with the function-based users. They agree with the statement that membership in social networks is a "must" at levels that are significantly below average. They wish to be less online in future at above-average levels.

The cautious users (12%) are the least online of all groups, averaging 2.7 hours a day. Accordingly, they engage in a variety of online activities at below-average levels. Their use of social networks and messenger services is remarkably low. Two thirds (65%) of those cautious users are young men, 35% are 12 to 14 years old.

The uploaders (12%) use the Internet intensively (4.3 hours per day) for a wide variety of purposes. In contrast to all of their groups, however, their focus is on self-promotion: They post their own photos, videos or music much more frequently, or post to blogs. Among the uploaders, young people from lower social groups and young people with an immigration background (44% compared to an average of 30%) are represented with above-average

frequency. For young people with an immigration background, the Internet obviously offers an opportunity to maintain relationships with family members and friends outside of Germany. More than the other groups, uploaders show signs of dependent relationship with the Internet and their smartphones. They also stand out for their rather uncritical attitude: Only 48% do not like the fact that Internet users are part of a business model (60% on average). Even when it comes to rating different news sources, uploaders stand out from all other groups: On the one hand, they are more suspicious of information from classic news channels, but on the other hand, they trust information from YouTube, Facebook or Twitter far more than any groups of youth.

## The qualitative part

The findings set out in the qualitative part of the Shell Youth Study show the extent to which digital content permeates the everyday lives of young people. For many young people, this starts when the alarm on the smartphone placed right next to their bed awakes them and continues when they then grab their phone and use it to access additional content. And it often ends at the same place, i.e. in bed in the evening, when the latest social news is exchanged once more before drifting off to sleep. In this context, the smartphone is a universal everyday device onto which a multitude of applications can be loaded. Discussions with young people show that there are large differences are already apparent within the 12 to 25 year-old age groups: Initial experiences with the extensive use of digital content are being made earlier and earlier. The older

adolescents experienced the advent of the smartphone themselves at an early age, whereas younger cohorts have practically never known a world without them.

Today's generation grew into the digital world intuitively and collectively - it was "all around them". Even though parents are, of course, active in digital world now themselves, young people feel superior to their parents in this respect. Schools were initially unable to keep up with the increased interest in the Internet and digital content, but only now are they beginning to push ahead with digitisation efforts.

WhatsApp has become the communications network of choice in recent years: It is indispensable if you want to stay up to date in social circles. All young people surveyed use it - even respondents concerned about data protection, and no one knows anyone who does not use it or a similar service. WhatsApp is used to make dates and responses are expected quickly in the case of meet-ups. As a rule, young people have between 30 and 50 contacts, and they chat regularly with between five and 20 people. For relationships, and especially in the case of long-distance relationships, WhatsApp aids in relationship maintenance. Most young people communicate with their parents via a family chat. The number of messages increases dramatically by virtue of one or more group chats. The second most important platform is YouTube. Videos are watched or shared, or music is listened to and series are watched along with documentaries and news. All young people google - on average four to five times a day - to answer spontaneous questions.

### Society is increasingly viewed online

Young people also use digital channels to inform themselves about news and society. In this environment, classical channels find it difficult to reach young people for whom information is available at all times largely free of charge.

Influencers have the ability to act as role models for young people in all age groups. Young people follow content from selected people in accordance with their interests. This is perceived to be authentic. At the same time, a critical view of influencer marketing is not limited to young people in older age groups. They have a clear idea of how things work and view it as particularly problematic when young teenagers are defined as a more easily-influenced target group. In this context, there are very critical opinions as to whether the money that can be earned as an influencer is legitimate. Opinions range from the view that it is everyone's dream to achieve something like this, to recognition of success in building such a broad reach with one's own content, to the rejection of these arrangements as they are out of proportion to the earning potential in social professions. Online shopping is the obvious choice for adolescents of all ages. The ability to shop wherever you are and the ability to compare prices undisturbed are unbeatable arguments for this form of shopping. However, there are also young people who prefer the actual experience of shopping. But when they go, it's entirely possible that they have done extensive online research to prepare for this experience.

When it comes to data protection, young people tend to shrug their shoulders. It is not so much a lack of awareness of the issue that characterises young people. They are well aware of the many traces they leave behind digitally. The fact is that there is a certain degree of complacency that prevents them from changing their own behaviour, in particular when any attempt to do so reaches its limits fairly quickly when friends are doing the same.

### Methodology

The 18th Shell Youth Study 2019 is based on a representative sample of 2,572 young people aged between 12 and 25 who were interviewed personally by trained Kantar interviewers regarding their living conditions and their attitudes and focus. The survey was conducted between early January to late March of 2019 on the basis of a standardised questionnaire. Two-hour, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 young people in this age group as part of this qualitative study.